

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently amended) A method of establishing communications comprising:

establishing a virtual connection between a source ~~endpoint~~ computer system assigned a source virtual host name and located behind a first connectivity barrier and a destination ~~endpoint~~ computer system assigned a destination virtual host name and located behind a second connectivity barrier;

establishing a first session between the source computer system and a service; and  
establishing a second session between the destination computer system and the service,  
the service maintaining the second session if the first session is temporarily lost and re-  
establishing the virtual connection when then first session is re-established.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein at least one of the connectivity barriers comprises a firewall.

3. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein at least one of the connectivity barriers comprises a consumer gateway.

Please cancel claims 4, 5 and 6.

7. (Currently amended) The method of claim ~~6~~ 1 wherein the virtual host names comprise name  
~~comprises~~ part of a hierarchical naming system.

8. (Currently amended) The method of claim 6 1 including providing a directory search application to allow a user to select the virtual host names ~~name~~.

9. (Currently amended) The method of claim 6 1 wherein the source ~~endpoint~~ computer system can roam between networks.

10. (Currently amended) The method of claim ~~[[4]]~~ 1 including dynamically assigning at least one server associated with the service to handle the sessions.

11. (Currently amended) A method of establishing communications between source and destination computer systems ~~endpoints~~ comprising:

establishing a session between the source ~~endpoint~~ computer system located behind a first connectivity barrier and a service; ~~and~~

establishing a transport level communications connection between the service and the destination ~~endpoint~~ computer system, the destination ~~endpoint~~ computer system located behind a second connectivity barrier; and

maintaining the session between the service and the destination computer system if the session between the source computer system and the service is interrupted.

12. (Previously presented) The method of claim 11 wherein the first and second barriers comprise firewalls.

13. (Previously presented) The method of claim 11 wherein the first and second barriers comprise consumer gateways.

14. (Original) The method of claim 11 including assigning a server associated with the service to handle the session.

15. (Currently amended) The method of claim 11 in which the session is established based on a virtual host name associated with the source ~~endpoint~~ computer system.

16. (Original) The method of claim 15 wherein the virtual host name comprises part of hierarchical naming system.

17. (Original) The method of claim 15 including providing a directory search application to allow a user to select the virtual host name.

18. (Currently amended) The method of claim 15 wherein the source ~~endpoint~~ computer system can roam between networks.

19. (Original) The method of claim 14 wherein the server is dynamically assigned.

20. (Currently amended) A system comprising:

a service arranged to respond to a request from a first ~~endpoint~~ computer system to establish communications with a second ~~endpoint~~ computer system, wherein, if the second ~~endpoint~~ computer system is located behind a connectivity barrier, a session initiated by the second ~~endpoint~~ computer system is established with the service, and if the second ~~endpoint~~ computer system is not located behind a connectivity barrier, a transport level communications connection is established with the second computer system ~~endpoint~~.

21. (Original) The system of claim 20 wherein the connectivity barrier comprises a firewall.

22. (Original) The system of claim 20 wherein the connectivity barrier comprises a consumer gateway.

23. (Currently amended) The system of claim 20 wherein the service is arranged to assign a server to handle the session between the first ~~endpoint~~ computer system and the service based on a virtual host name associated with the first ~~endpoint~~ computer system.

24. (Original) The system of claim 23 wherein the virtual host name comprises part of hierarchical naming system.

25. (Currently amended) The system of claim 20 wherein the service is arranged to assign a server to handle the session between the first ~~endpoint~~ computer system and the service dynamically.

26. (Currently amended) An article comprising a computer-readable medium including computer-executable instructions for causing a computer system, in response to a request from a first ~~endpoint~~ computer system located behind a first connectivity barrier to establish connectivity to a second computer system endpoint, to:

assign a server to handle a session between the first computer system endpoint and a service; ~~and~~

establish a session initiated by the second computer system endpoint if the second computer system endpoint is located behind a second connectivity barrier; ~~and~~

maintain the session between the service and the destination computer system if the session between the source computer system and the service is interrupted.

27. (Currently amended) The article of claim 26 including instructions for causing the computer system to establish a transport level communications connection to the second computer system endpoint if the second computer system endpoint is not located behind a connectivity barrier.

28. (Currently amended) The article of claim 26 including instructions for causing the computer system to instruct the first computer system endpoint to establish a direct session with the second

computer system endpoint if the second computer system endpoint is not located behind a connectivity barrier.

29. (Currently amended) The article of claim 26 including instructions for causing the computer system to establish the session between the first computer system endpoint and the service based on a virtual host name associated with the first computer system endpoint.

30. (Original) The article of claim 29 wherein the virtual host name comprises part of hierarchical naming system.